AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

Claims 1-40 are canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 41-62 are added. The following is the status of the claims of the above-captioned application, as amended.

Claims 1-40.

Claim 41 (New). A *Bacillus licheniformis* mutant host cell derived from a parent *Bacillus. licheniformis* host cell, which mutant host cell comprises a mutation in a gene encoding a polypeptide involved in antibiotic synthesis, wherein said gene is native to said host cell, and wherein said gene encodes a polypeptide which is at least 95% identical to the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:2, and wherein the mutant host cell expresses at least 5% less of said polypeptide as compared to an identical host cell which is not mutated in said gene, when cultivated under comparable conditions.

Claim 42 (New). The host cell of claim 41, wherein said mutation is a partial or complete deletion of said gene.

Claim 43 (New). The host cell of claim 41, which comprises one or more heterologous gene(s) encoding one or more heterologous polypeptide(s).

Claim 44 (New). The host cell of claim 43, wherein the heterologous gene(s) are present in at least two copies.

Claim 45 (New). The host cell of claim 43, wherein the heterologous gene(s) are stably integrated into the genome of the cell.

Claim 46 (New). The host cell of claim 43, wherein the heterologous gene(s) are integrated into the genome of the cell without leaving any antibiotic resistance marker genes at the site of integration.

Claim 47 (New). The host cell of claim 43, wherein the heterologous gene(s) are transcribed from a heterologous promoter or from an artificial promoter.

Claim 48 (New). The host cell of claim 43, wherein the heterologous gene(s) are comprised in an operon.

Claim 49 (New). The host cell of claim 43, wherein the heterologous polypeptide(s) are antimicrobial peptides and/or a fusion peptide comprising a peptide which in its native form has antimicrobial activity.

Claim 50 (New). The host cell of claim 43, wherein the heterologous polypeptide(s) have biosynthetic activity and produce a compound or an intermediate of interest.

Claim 51 (New). The host cell of claim 50, wherein the compound or intermediate of interest comprises vitamins, amino acids, antibiotics, carbohydrates, or surfactants.

Claim 52 (New). The host cell of claim 51, wherein the carbohydrates comprise hyaluronic acid.

Claim 53 (New). The host cell of claim 43, wherein the heterologous polypeptide(s) are enzymes.

Claim 54 (New). The host cell of claim 53, wherein the enzymes are enzymes of a class selected from the group of enzyme classes consisting of oxidoreductases (EC 1), transferases (EC 2), hydrolases (EC 3), lyases (EC 4), isomerases (EC 5), and ligases (EC 6).

Claim 55 (New). The host cell of claim 53, wherein the enzymes are enzymes with an activity selected from the group of enzyme activities consisting of aminopeptidase, amylase, amyloglucosidase, carbohydrase, carboxypeptidase, catalase, cellulase, chitinase, cutinase, cyclodextrin glycosyltransferase, deoxyribonuclease, esterase, galactosidase, beta-galactosidase, glucoamylase, glucose oxidase, glucosidase, haloperoxidase, hemicellulase, invertase, isomerase, laccase, ligase, lipase, lyase, mannanase, mannosidase, oxidase, pectinase, peroxidase, phytase, phenoloxidase, polyphenoloxidase, protease, ribonuclease, transferase, transglutaminase, and xylanase.

Claim 56 (New). The host cell of claim 53, wherein the enzymes are amylases or

mannanases.

Claim 57 (New). A process for producing a product of interest, comprising cultivating the *Bacillus licheniformis* mutant host cell of claim 41 in a suitable medium to produce the product of interest.

Claim 58 (New). The process of claim 57, further comprising isolating or purifying the product of interest.

Claim 59 (New). The host cell of claim 41, wherein said mutation is in a gene encoding a polypeptide which is at least 97% identical to the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:2.

Claim 60 (New). The host cell of claim 59, wherein said mutation is a partial or complete deletion of said gene.

Claim 61 (New). The host cell of claim 41, wherein said mutation is in a gene encoding the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:2.

Claim 62 (New). The host cell of claim 63, wherein said mutation is a partial or complete deletion of said gene.